Review Article

Role and Importance of Effective Communication during the Age of COVID-19

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Abstract

Currently, in the COVID-19 pandemic, few nations have effectively diminished their contamination rate early, while others have been overpowered. There are various reasons behind effective decrease in the rate of contamination in different nations but ,the one that stands out is the distinguished rate which decides on how the information has been provided by the government and other networks and its effective adaptation and implementation by the public. This global disease has disturbed people psychologically; henceforth, effective communication, if overlooked, can be endangered for susceptible populations. Herein, this article gives an insight view of the basic structure for effective communication during the pandemic which should be understandable and practiced by the medical and dental experts and other health-care workers for developing a good rapport for treating COVID-19 patients. Effective communication aims at providing information to the public that may seem senseless at first instance , as well as aims at increasing their self reliance to react on the details they have that may also be beneficial. To develop a way for preventing and controlling future viral illnesses, especially those as dangerous as COVID-19, we need to move forward by building trust and developing multidisciplinary voices which help in utilizing effective communication for various objectives and audiences, so that clear, compassionate, and practical messages can be delivered.

Keywords: Communication, Cov-2, COVID-19, information, message, pandemic, psychological, SARS

INTRODUCTION

The mystical coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) or 2019-nCoV was first seen as a potent case in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, and slowly it has become widespread globally. The global outburst of the disease exaggerated to a level that individuals have been suffering from different negative impacts of the disease such as psychological diseases, lethargy, occupational stress, anxiety and humiliation. Therefore after observing the deleterious situations of COVID disease , effective communication appears to be of utmost importance at the workplace, amongst families and among communities which can be supportive to combat the disease.

The method for transmitting messages to communicate with the public can be through speech, writing or any another medium. In the current situation, the majority of COVID-19 information is disseminated through the media and social media. The requirement of the hour is for diligent

communication at all levels. The current pandemic is not only physically impacting people, but it is also causing a lot of mental and social stigma. Initially, not only the persons who became infected with COVID-19 but also health-care personnel were subjected to societal shame and isolation as a result of the disease's epidemic.

Communication of prophylactic measures as well as positive information about the crucial and essential role played by health-care personnel through the media has influenced people's perceptions.

The manner in which information is disseminated is also crucial. The unpredictable nature of the emergency evacuation of Indian students stuck in many parts of the world, including

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Wuhan, which was telecast on several platforms, aroused dread among the general population. However, the widespread use of masks, social distancing, hand hygiene through phone caller tunes, advertisement, online competitions among schoolchildren, the time-to-time release of guidelines from the government's ministry on social media, Aarogya Setu app, and other measures to contain its spread proved to be a lifesaver. Education and promotion of daily exercise or yoga practice throughout the world have aided in the alleviation of stress and anxiety in people of all ages and from all walks of life. As a result, social marketing is critical in promoting primary care.

These social channels have taken over the role of health melas and camping in raising community awareness. Physicians, on the contrary, continue to play a critical role. The necessity of the hour is to communicate accurate information promptly. There are doubts concerning the timelines for the normalization of conditions because the pandemic is still ongoing. Physicians should use social media platforms to educate the general public more frequently. Both at the national and local levels, educational movies with verified information about diseases that do not require frequent hospital visits, as well as emergency circumstances that demand prompt attention, should be widely distributed. Telemedicine services should be used to communicate effectively about COVID-19, and efforts should be made to eliminate the social stigma associated with the disease.[1-4]

METHODOLOGY

A literature search was done systematically of various journals indexes such as PubMed, EMBASE, Google Scholar, and others to identify various studies done about the role and effects of communication during a pandemic. Major search terms were COVID-19, communication, information, and psychological. Articles from the last 1 year were collected and the other data were collected through various relevant cross-references and publications. After excluding articles that were outside the realm of investigation, a total of 35 articles were systematically reviewed.

Current scenario

The availability and empowering of the right information is the single most critical component in halting COVID-19's spread. In the midst of the pandemic, that is COVID-19, there is over usage of multiple information related to pandemic leading to a terminology called infodemic. False information regarding a separate COVID-19 webpage is essential to run in the event of a pandemic. A dedicated COVID-19 web portal is owned by the Indian government along with national and statewide telephone portals, specific mail addresses, and designated information desks on different socializing applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube. To provide information, and proactively reach out to users, the Indian government has created the Aarogya Setu app, which contains information on COVID-19 dangers, recommended practices, and necessary recommendations.

The government implemented the idea of implementing the called tune as an individual coughing rather than a normal telephonic tune which was then followed by an informative message related to coronavirus. It is a 30-s multilingual audio clip developed to make the public aware of the pandemic situation. Information and education tactics are defined by these examples. Information and education tactics even include awareness through paintings at different places, informative images on social media, and several snippets on newspapers.

Modes of primary prevention methods of COVID-19 are wrapping your mouth when coughing, sneezing, and talking; handwashing often; social distancing; and seeking medical help if you are sick. Amitabh Bachchan, a popular figure in India, was enlisted by the federal Government of India to promote positive behavior about COVID-19 as an interesting move to target the behavioral change communication theory among the public. A behavior change communication (BCC) strategy is to provide knowledge about home quarantine for a COVID-19 suspect.

India has been utilizing social marketing widely to spread awareness regarding many social issues like the importance of Breastfeeding, personal cleanliness, immunization, tobacco control, and a variety of other topics are all important. During COVID-19 India has been utilizing social marketing along with many multinational corporations and brands to disseminate information regarding handwashing and the importance of wearing masks and social distancing. For example, "Children act in a soap advertisement video to deliver simple and obvious messages to a young audience, where they are seen advocating clear message to the audience and trying to persuade people to use their soap or any soap available to wash their hands". Other branded washing powder, Surf Excel in their video, promotes social segregation and movement restrictions. Another example is channel provider Tata Sky encouraging people to be active and involved in their homes during COVID-19's reduced mobility time. Webinar links concerning coronavirus are circulating over the internet. Selecting the optimal link for standardized information collecting is tough for the common person. India's Integrated Government iGOT Corona portal can be used for achieving access and literature on the coronavirus through online training.

MODES OF TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION

In the current era, the information transferred to the public has become patholic because of which there are chances of spread of false information around therefore nationwide, Indian Government has innovated Aarogya Setu mobile which is providing relevant data regarding risks and beneficiaries of COVID-19. Other sources are telephone numbers on national and state levels, specific mail addresses, the government's WhatsApp-based social activity, and other social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, NewDesk Telegram, Instagram and YouTube. This problem can be solved through the involvement of various sectoral approaches in the truest

sense. Other sectors must be involved, and a setting-based approach to developing health literacy must be used.

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

There are various strategies to be followed by Government for effective communication as:

1. BCC: Promotional methods to reduce the spread of this endangered disease by the actor Amitabh Bachchan, education of home quarantine through television
2. Information and education communication strategies: Change in a few seconds audio clip of caller tune, Hoardings with messages in public places, social media as audio and various videos, newspapers, webinars.

SOCIAL STIGMA

The unfavorable relationship that exists between an individual or a collection of people sharing common and specific characteristics with a specific disease is known as social stigma. According to the researchers, stigma and fear of communicable diseases stifle favorable responses. People and communities are stressed by health catastrophes (for example the recent pandemic of COVID-19). Fear and worry, along with a scarcity of understanding of the illness, can result in societal stigma.

The following factors contribute to the stigma associated with COVID-19:

- It's a brand-new disease, and we don't know nearly enough about it
- Fear of the unknown is common among people
- The public feels befuddled, anxious, and fearful, resulting in a negative attitude.[5-12]

Role of behavioral change communication

Behavioral change communication can benefit both public health and clinical settings. BCC primarily provides counseling to prevent addiction and develops various for screening the diseases, which helps the patient understand his/her health better and thus improves communication between the doctor and the patient. BCC helps to dispel the myths and misunderstandings that exist in today's culture. BCC helps in making people understand the advantage and benefits under various schemes and programs run by various national health programs and interventions. The role of BCC is enhanced by policymakers to encourage novel services and thus allows in collaborative functioning of different professions. The various examples of recently emerging infections recently are H1N1 virus-induced influenza, Middle East respiratory syndrome, Bird Flu, Severe acute respiratory syndrome, Hantavirus, Zika virus, and COVID-19, whereas diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, pertussis, pneumonia, and gonorrhea are examples of re-emerging infections. Behavioral immunity can be fostered with successful BCC procedures with a theoretical base in the absence of a viable medication or vaccine. BCC

Table 1: Role of behavioral change communication

Do's	Dont's
Discuss the new coronavirus sickness (COVID-19)	Not a "Wuhan Virus," "China Virus" or "Asian Virus" as it is against ethics
Discuss the risk factors in detail, based on scientific evidence and the most recent government health recommendations	Not to spread unsubstantiated rumors
Speak positively regarding efficient prevention and treatment measures	No negative messages of threat
Mention "Those who might have COVID-19"	Not to speak about suspected cases
Speak about "People infected with COVID-19," "COVID-19 patients undergoing treatment," "COVID-19 patients in remission" or "Those who died as a result of contracting COVID-19"	Don't call those who have the condition "COVID-19 cases" or "Victims"

COVID-19: Coronavirus disease 2019

theories/models can be used to control the current COVID-19 pandemic at the individual, interpersonal, and communal levels [Table 1].

Factors affecting effective communication

Effective communication is determined when it is proactively courteous and tries to invent original and constructive ideas that are professional and progressive enabling it to be enthusiastic and technology-friendly. Several factors play a significant influence in the acceptance of information, including social and cultural characteristics. The action of the masses is highly influenced by gender, ethnicity, contrasting generation gaps, different inclinations toward different languages, and literacy. Improvement in awareness and eventually accepting or not accepting the government advisories is largely dependent on managing the difficulties and improving the attitude toward public health. Vaccination and the availability of treatment options may have significant consequences on the decision-making by individuals and organizations in the benefit and compatibility of accepting beliefs for their health in a pandemic. It is difficult for regular daily wages workers to sit back at home and follow quarantine rules. The availability, reliability, access to, and the price of personal protective equipment to health-care employees and the general community also remains a concern.

Framework for effective communication during a pandemic

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended countries to take proactive effort to engage with the community about the outbreak, as disseminating crucial information about the outbreak can help to limit disease spread and foster public cooperation with the government. During a pandemic content, method people and partners play a major role in effective communication. Content of communication is according to the phase and situation-specific making sure that communication proceeds and helps in monitoring during the various stages of

a pandemic's operational and community reaction. Various methods such as audio and video blogs, information through call centers, seminars, teleconference, group health videos, and broadcasting media ensure communication. The main target of communication is from message conception to delivery, taking a community-based strategy. Trusted and reputable information sources are crucial in ensuring that individuals go from perception to action during a pandemic, as agitation, suspicion, and resistance run rampant in people's minds. Before during, and after a pandemic, messages are aimed at partners, places, and the web that vulnerable populations consider as honest, reliable, and attainable.

Role of a family physician in determining strategies for effective communication

Effectual doctor-patient communication is a critical clinical performance in forming a doctor–patient collaboration for generating therapy regimens, which is the heart and soul of medicine.

The role of family doctors is "first in, last out." They are always in the foreground. They're also in charge of dealing with the fallout from disasters. Outbreaks would have long-term effects on a community's physical and psychological wellbeing, affecting future generations. Family doctors have been providing care and treatment for years.

Mistakes to avoid ensuring effective communication

In outbreak, everything is reliant. Internally with workers, colleagues, and workfellow, as well as externally with the single, group, and nation, effective communication is critical. It is critical to ignore committing blunders when communicating. Mixed or delayed messages, paternalism, dismissing speculations or myths, conflicts over governance power, unrealistic assumption, scientific jargon and composition, false claims, imprecise, abstract, blaming, and other issues are among them.

Role of a family physician during infodemic

Family physicians spend a lot of time with unwell, possibly dying patients and their families is one of the most crucial techniques during this horrified COVID-19 outbreak. The basic concept is that patients and their families must have faith in the physician. The physical and emotional health of a community is affected by a pandemic. Pandemic-related worry and fear can be managed with the assistance and counseling of a qualified family physician. The influence of doctor-patient relationships on treatment results in both favorable and negative. Family physicians must be able to use efficient consultation ways depending on the situation. Patients are now subject to a large amount of information due to rapid technological progress. In the fight against COVID-19, family physicians serve as "first in, last out" gatekeepers. As well-honoured citizens of their communities, family physicians may be able to help raise COVID-19 risk understanding and recognition. The family physician's effective communication aids in the simple and honest minimization of COVID-19 information. By

counseling and teaching patients how to gain access to genuine data from government or nongovernmental organizations, a family physician can help them reduce their threat. Finally, the widespread purpose of productive communication is to convey logical thinking and precise details to help patients and their families enhance their health. Primary care teams are coordinated by family doctors. They can collaborate with other professionals and authorities to ensure that relevant risk-reduction activities are performed as soon as possible. However, we must not overlook the influence of medical crisis on family physicians. They are not immune to the dangers in their environment or the consequences of widespread infection. They can, however, aid in risk mitigation by advising and guiding patients, as well as helping to fund risk mitigation in the community initiatives run by a government or nonprofit organizations. Family doctors must demonstrate proficiency via on going professional growth and training to acquire the public's confidence and other professions. Family doctors must be trained in all aspects of prevention, preparedness, response, and rehabilitation.

In China, for example, tremendous progress has been made. Doctors' training should be formally certified and accredited. And community clinics have been adopted thanks to the efforts of the World Organization of Family Doctors and other medical experts organizations such as the Chinese Medical Doctor Association.

"This is the time for facts, not fear," says WHO Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. This is not the time for rumors; it is the moment for science. "This is the time for unity, not condemnation." Family doctors are dedicated to first line therapy teams in the fight against this medical disaster. We are concerned about the safety of our cases in society and we want to see those who are undergoing medical care in health centers return to our community as quickly as possible.

DISCUSSION

Our findings revealed that the government used a variety of content frames, message styles, and interactive elements to communicate about COVID-19 with the public on social media in order to deal with the health crisis. However, varied levels of engagement were discovered. This study proposes a fresh, complete framework of the characteristics that engage the public in COVID-19 government communication on social media by empirically assessing metrics of health content frames, message style, and interactive features. Governments and health organizations can select which components to emphasize in an attempt to minimize the spread of the new disease by drawing on this knowledge and using the power of social media.

The sample time is one of the study's drawbacks. Because we only collected posts from a limited time period, the results may fluctuate over time as an outbreak evolves. Our COVID-19 public communication paradigm may be objectively tested to determine the strength of the three dimensions and applicable

to various cultural contexts. COVID-19 communication can be investigated in terms of impact through other channels of behavior or practice as well, because young people regularly utilize social media while some populations still use traditional mass media in various ways. To obtain further insight into this problem, a research of the use of other major social media sites such as WeChat in China to communicate COVID-19 material might be done. Delivering dreadful news and addressing treatment objectives are still effective strategies for illnesses associated with COVID-19. Having effective communication skills will increase patients' quality of life and trust in health-care professionals. It will also have a beneficial impact on community behavior. Patients and families won't learn what they need to know until we acknowledge the fear, despair, and worry that they feel. It is ideal to provide information in brief packages that begin with a headline. When we weave terrible news within a complicated, lengthy medical story, our patients become disoriented and miss the information. In addition, during a crisis or any epidemic, organizations and spokespersons that provide messages and information are more likely to uphold and even increase confidence. Finding out who is in charge of informing health-care professionals, the media, and the general public about each component of the inquiry is extremely crucial.[13-20]

A positive trend emerging from the global COVID-19 reaction was the chance for usually distinct disciplines and organizations to collaborate to tackle a common problem. We won't have a chance to achieve One Health goals and stop future pandemics until we remove underlying obstacles and improve enablers to meet the demand for effective communication at various stages. In the end, the goal of successful communication is to increase people's self-efficacy to act on the knowledge they have rather than overwhelm them with the information they can't make sense of.[21-23]

CONCLUSION

In the event of a pandemic, effective communication must be tailored to the individual. During a pandemic, it is critical to prepare for the occurrence of the variable risk and manage variability. At a national scale, implementing this comprehensive, technology-friendly structure for successful and integrated COVID-19 communications is critical. COVID-19 pandemic containment also necessitates a doctor's and other health-care employees' effective communication and communal skills. These abilities include the caliber to gather data to aid precise interpretation, provide proper isolation and quarantine recommendations, come up with clinical counsel, and create a bond with patients. Mankind should take knowledge about Coronavirus from credible sources and, more importantly, adhere to formal guidelines to develop plans and protect susceptible populations. Furthermore, the aim of good communication is to increase people's self-reliance to act on the knowledge they have, rather than to overwhelm them with the information they cannot understand. Building faith and utilizing transdisciplinary voices that offer clear, empathic,

and practical messages via effective communication adapted for varied objectives and audiences are crucial for future viral disease prevention and control, particularly those as explosive as COVID-19.

SUMMARY

In SARS-CoV-2, communication is critical from the government to the people, from the media to the people, from people to people, from doctor to patient, and so on. Content, accuracy, comprehensive indications, character, tone, tradition, and symbolism principles are all important ineffective communication.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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